

POLICY – DEATH OF A CHILD AT THE SERVICE

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1. National Quality Standards

Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety		
Area	Concept	Descriptor
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership		
Area	Concept	Descriptor
7.2	Leadership	Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

Appendix 1 includes the Education and Care Services National Regulations

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The unexpected death of a child at the service is traumatic and requires a coordinated response, ensuring mandatory reporting requirements to the regulatory authorities are followed. As a result of the suddenness of such an event, well-trained and experienced staff can experience strong emotions and traumatic stress responses. Baringa Early Learning Centre (Baringa) has a responsibility to help restore a sense of safety for all children, educators, and families as soon as possible following a traumatic event.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of Baringa.

4. Definitions and Mandatory Requirements

- 4.1 Regulation 12 defines a serious incident involving the death of a child as:

- (a) The death of a child –
i) while that child is being educated and cared for by an education and care service, or

- ii) following an incident occurring while that child was being educated and cared for by an education and care service.

- 4.2 Under the National Law and Regulations [Section 174(2) (a) and Regulation 176 (2) (a)], the Approved Provider must notify the regulatory authorities within 24 hours of any serious incidents. This must be completed by logging into the [National Quality Agenda IT System \(NQA IT System\)](#).
- 4.3 In the event of the death of a child whilst being cared for at the Service, records must be kept for 7 years from the date of the child's death. [Regulation 183 (c)].

5. Implementation

- 5.1 Management and Educators will ensure that immediate and appropriate action is taken in the event of the death of a child whilst at Baringa by:
- a) Assessing the situation as per service and First Aid procedures for any immediate danger to other children and/or staff.
 - b) Providing immediate First Aid and/or CPR in accordance with current First Aid training.
 - c) Calling emergency services immediately and request an ambulance.
 - d) Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will call the parents/guardian of the child and arrange to meet at the hospital. Baringa must not advise parents of the death of their child: Medical staff will advise families of the situation.
 - e) Notifying Regulatory Authorities including ACT Police.
 - f) The Responsible Person will complete in detail the Service's *Incident, injury, trauma and illness* form (in addition to notifying ACECQA via the NQA IT System).
 - g) Management will log the incident on the NQA IT System, attaching incident form and evidence <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/national-quality-agenda-it-system>
 - h) Management will contact the insurance company.
- 5.2 Following the serious incident, Management will:
- a) Ensure parents, families, children, and educators receive professional and sensitive communication and appropriate post-incident support, recognising cultural needs.
 - b) Ensure all evidence is preserved.
 - c) Maintain accurate and detailed records.
 - d) Seek legal advice for support and direction.
 - e) Establish protocols for staff and educators to discuss the traumatic event, including for social media.
 - f) Engage the services of health care professionals (counselling and support for staff).
 - g) Cooperate on an ongoing basis with inter-agencies involved in the investigation.
- 5.3 Caring for the wellbeing of educators, children, and families:
- a) Baringa will engage health professionals who may include child and family counsellors and psychologists to support our educators during this profoundly difficult time. Health professional will assist educators to be sensitive and mindful of the impact such an event has had on all stakeholders. With professional guidance and support, we will encourage children to express their emotions and feelings and implement strategies to assist and guide children's process of grieving and re-engage children in learning.
 - b) Educators will support children's understanding of grief and loss by:
 - i) Answering questions simply and honestly.
 - ii) Allowing children to express their emotions and feelings.
 - iii) Providing appropriate comfort.
 - iv) Implementing a range of learning experiences to express their thoughts- drawing, movement, play.

v) Creating a safe space for time alone when needed.

- 5.4 Baringa will seek advice and support from health professionals to provide appropriate materials to send home to families to assist in understanding the effects of trauma on children and possible changes in behaviour following the unexpected death of a child in our service. Access to the following Support Services will also be encouraged.

BeYou	1300 224 636	www.beyou.edu.au
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636	www.beyondblue.org.au
Headspace	1800 650 890	www.headspace.org.au
Lifeline	13 11 14	www.lifeline.org.au
Kid's Help Line	1800 551 800	https://kidshelpline.com.au

6. Feedback

Families and staff may provide feedback about this document by emailing admin@baringa.org.au.

7. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Baringa Board
Administrator	Executive Officer
Next Review Date	31 October 2024
History	Details
Original Approval/Revision and Authority Date	This policy supersedes the previous Death of a Child Policy, S32 of the Baringa Policies and Procedures Manual
Amendment Authority and Date	31 October 2021

Appendix 1 Education and Care Services National Regulations

Education and Care Services National Regulations	
12	Meaning of serious incident
85	Incident, injury, trauma and illness policies and procedures
176	Time to notify certain information to Regulatory Authority
183 (c)	Storage of records and other documents The records must be kept- (c) if the record relates to the death of a child while being educated and cared for by the education and care service or that may have occurred as result of an incident while being educated and cared for, until the end of 7 years after the death.

Appendix 2 Source

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement: <http://www.grief.org.au>

Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network:

http://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/ACATLGN_grief_and_loss.pdf

Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations. (2017).

Education and Care National Regulations. (2011).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2017).

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

What Do We Tell the Children When Someone Dies? http://www.adac.org.au/siteF/resources/l_children_gt.pdf

Work Health and Safety Act 2011.